

REMARKS

Applicant requests clarification on whether the examiner withdrew the rejection of Claims 1, 9, 21, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement, since that rejection was not repeated in the present office action.

The examiner rejected Claims 1-7, 9-14, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ritchey (5,495,576) in view of Dutta et al. (6,453,294).

Claim 1 is directed to a virtual reality presentation method. Claim 1, as amended, includes the features of capturing the presentation environment comprising music in addition to the user's speech, transforming the audio of the user to an gender different from the gender of the user, animating a character ... mixing the transformed audio of the user with the captured presentation environment, including the music by generating a linear sum of combined voice and environment including the music, and rendering the transformed audio of the user in the environment including music

This combination of features is not suggested by the references. In particular, there is no suggestion of capturing the presentation environment comprising music in addition to the user's speech, transforming the audio of the user to an gender different from the gender of the user, animating a character ... mixing the transformed audio of the user with the captured presentation environment. Ritchey describes fundamental virtual reality processing. However, as recognized by the examiner, Ritchey does not discuss any actions of transforming of user audio to a different gender. Dutta et al. while discussing transforming does so only in the context of an avatar for interactive communications between users such as using the avatar as an alias in a chat room. Dutta does not describe a virtual reality presentation and does not suggest capturing the presentation environment comprising music in addition to the user's speech, transforming the audio of the user to an gender different from the gender of the user, animating a character ... mixing the transformed audio of the user with the captured presentation environment.

In the context of the system and method described and claimed by Applicant, namely a virtual reality presentation, as in the case of a show or entertainment for example, there would be

no basis to include the features of capturing the presentation environment comprising music in addition to the user's speech or ... mixing the transformed audio of the user with the captured presentation environment, including the music by generating a linear sum of combined voice and environment.

Ritchey relates to virtual reality processing, in which the user is immersed in a modeled environment, to enable a model of the user to navigate in a virtual world. Claim 1 in contrast, has the user transformed into an animated character navigating in the audio environment of the user with a gender transformed voice.

Therefore, since neither reference suggest this specific combination of features, Claim 1 is allowable over the references.

Moreover, there is no suggestion to make the proposed combination as set out by the examiner. Dutta relates to screen displays of Avatars whereas Ritchey relates to virtual reality processing. Neither the references themselves nor the general prior art provides any motivation to combine the references. As recognized by the examiner, Ritchey does not discuss transforming the audio of the user to a different gender and animating a character with the motion and transformed audio of the different gender. Dutta on the other hand would not have any use for the virtual reality processing discussed in Ritchey, since Dutta teaches an avatar for use for alias in the context of chat rooms. It would serve no purpose as contemplated by Dutta to capture motions of the user. Therefore, Claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 3-7, which depend on claim 1, claims 9 and 11-14, which share similar features of claims 1-7 and add the limitations of 3-dimensions are allowable over the references for at least the reasons discussed in claim 1.

Claims 15-32 were canceled thus obviating the need to address the rejection of claims 23-30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ritchey '576 in view of Yamamoto, U.S. Patent 5,923,337 or claim 31 over those references with Doval et al., U.S. Patent 6,476,834.

Nonetheless, these references fail to suggest the features of the pending claims as now It is believed that all the rejections and/or objections raised by the examiner have been addressed.

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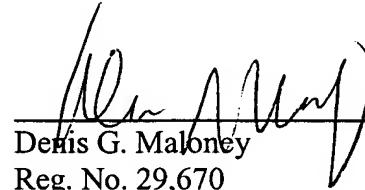
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Canceled claims, if any, have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Any circumstance in which the applicant has (a) addressed certain comments of the examiner does not mean that the applicant concedes other comments of the examiner, (b) made arguments for the patentability of some claims does not mean that there are not other good reasons for patentability of those claims and other claims, or (c) amended or canceled a claim does not mean that the applicant concedes any of the examiner's positions with respect to that claim or other claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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